

DSS



Diplomatic Security Service



2020

Accomplishments



Introduction

Wherever U.S. diplomats are advancing America's interests, the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) is there, protecting the department's people, facilities, and information. From the streets of San Francisco to the grasslands of Zimbabwe to the temples of Kathmandu, DSS provides a safe environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

Around the world, around the clock, DSS special agents, security engineering officers, security technical specialists, diplomatic couriers, civil servants, contractors, and local staff remain vigilant, protecting U.S. borders and national security.

Like the rest of the world, in 2020, the novel coronavirus pandemic forced DSS to find new ways of working-telework, enhanced IT services, and more. However, as law enforcement officers, DSS special agents, and other security personnel had to maintain a secure and physical posture at U.S. Department of State facilities around the world.

These law enforcement and security professionals are essential to U.S. diplomacy. Following is a snapshot of 2020 activities that represent the core mission of DSS.



Protect

The men and women of DSS protect U.S. Department of State facilities, people, and information at more than 270 locations in over 170 countries around the world. DSS also protects the U.S. secretary of state, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, visiting foreign dignitaries, U.S. athletes at international sporting events, and other designated officials.



U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo departs London, United Kingdom, on July 22, 2020. [U.S. Department of State Photo]

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Aerial view of the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center in Blackstone, Virginia. (U.S. Department of State photo)

In 2020, DSS celebrated the one-year anniversary of the official opening of the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) in Blackstone, Virginia. The consolidated training facility provides hard-skills training for DSS special agents and other members of the foreign affairs community. Despite the limitations put in place by the COVID-19 pandemic, FASTC trained approximately 3,200 students and conducted 117 classes in its inaugural year.



In February 2020, DSS planned and conducted protective security operations for U.S. Ambassador to Libya Richard Norland as he met with Libyan National Army Commander General Khalifa Haftar - the first visit by a U.S. ambassador to eastern Libya since the 2012 Benghazi attack. DSS special agents also escorted Norland during a June 2020 visit to Western Libya, where the ambassador met with Libyan Prime Minister Fayeze al-Sarraj.

U.S. Ambassador to Libya Richard Norland (middle right) and Commander of U.S. Africa Command, General Stephen Townsend (far right), meet with Libyan Prime Minister Fayeze al-Sarraj (middle left) and Libyan Minister of Interior Fathi Bashagha (far left) on June 22, 2020, in Zuwara, Libya. (U.S. Department of State photo)



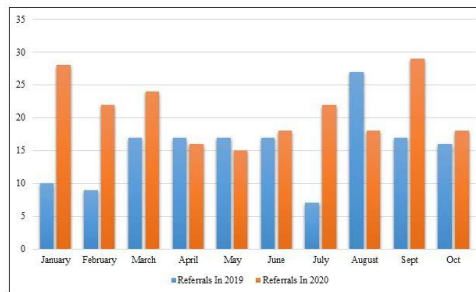
U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Benin Patricia Mahoney (second from left) and Benin's Minister of Interior Sacca Lafia (third from left) sign a letter of agreement formally establishing West Africa's first SPEAR team in a non-high threat country, Cotonou, Benin, Oct. 1, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

Benin became the latest nation to partner with DSS as a part of the Special Program for Embassy Augmentation Response (SPEAR). SPEAR enhances the security of U.S. diplomatic posts in high-threat, high-risk environments by training law enforcement and security personnel in host nations to better respond to emergencies at U.S. diplomatic facilities.

Read more about the newest SPEAR team: <https://www.state.gov/u-s-embassy-in-coto-nou-signs-spear-letter-ofagreement/>

2020 ITP Metrics

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Total
Referrals In 2019	10	9	17	17	17	17	7	27	17	16	154
Referrals In 2020	28	22	24	16	15	18	22	18	29	18	210
	180%	144%	41%	-6%	-12%	6%	214%	-33%	71%	13%	36%



The State Department's Insider Threat Program, managed by DSS, educated a record number of employees through its department-wide campaign to highlight National Insider Threat Awareness Month in September 2020. By the end of 2020, yearly reports were 29 percent higher than last year, proving that education and outreach have increased employees knowledge of the program.



Display of gear issued to and used by DSS special agents, Alexandria, Va., July 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

In 2020, the Defensive Equipment and Armored Vehicle Division improved its supply chain process dramatically by pairing DSS program managers and financial specialists with contracting officers of the State Department's Bureau of Administration. This cut the DSS acquisition timeline by months, allowing DSS to quickly deliver high quality, critical defensive equipment and protective gear to special agents and other security personnel worldwide.

Protect



DSS special agents provide security and force protection for the Emergency Support Function #9 search and rescue teams that conducted searches after Hurricane Laura hit Louisiana, August 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

After Hurricane Laura hit Louisiana in August of 2020, DSS special agents supported the Federal Emergency Management Agency's post-hurricane activities by providing force protection to urban search and rescue teams that conducted damage assessments.

Secure

DSS provides a safe environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy through its technical security countermeasures, physical security, and cybersecurity expertise. DSS is a leader in mitigating terrorist threats and other risks to U.S. personnel and facilities at home and abroad.



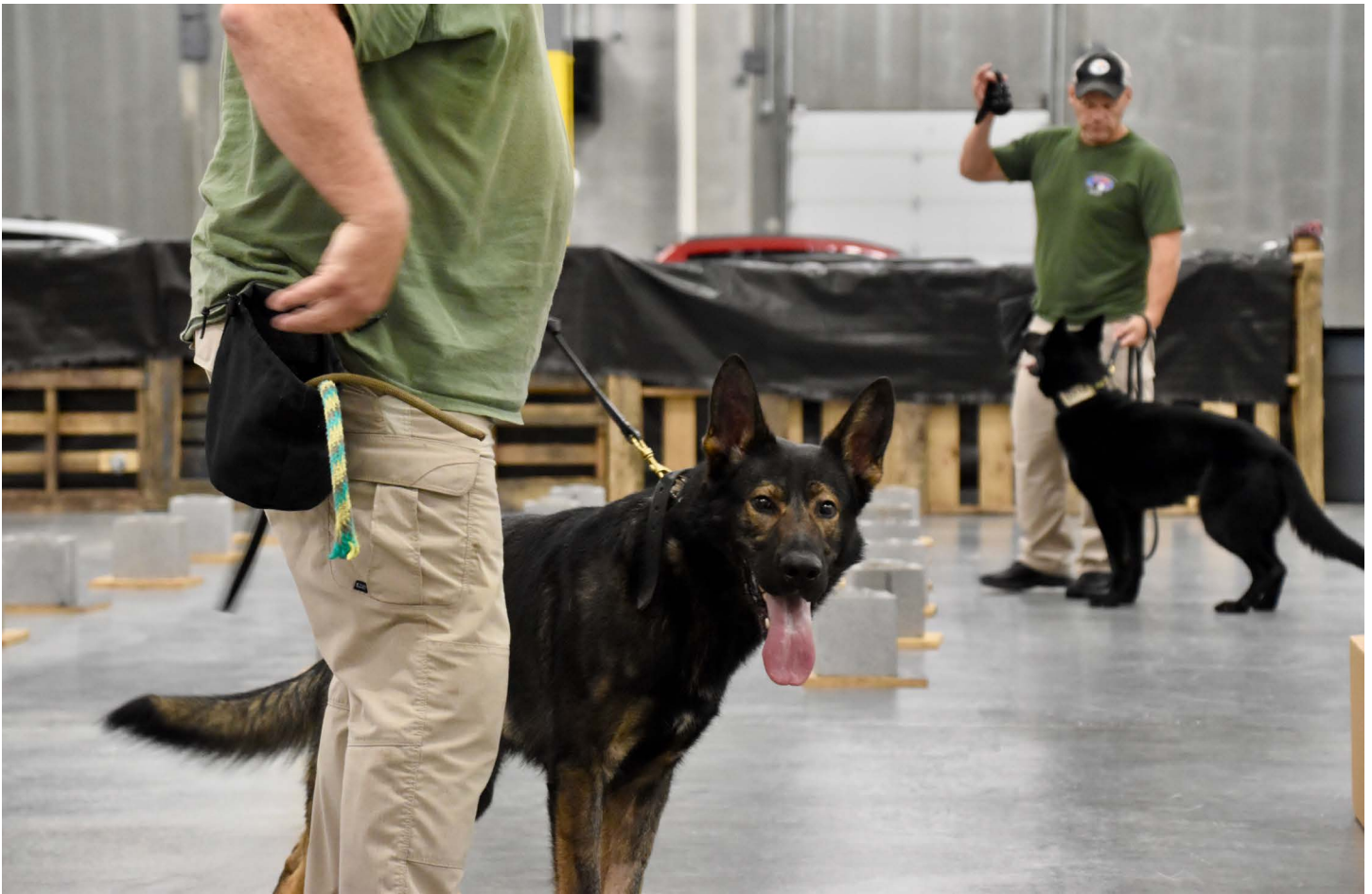
Special Agent Evan Tsurumi (center, front) helps with a tow strap to remove a burning obstacle during an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, on Dec. 31, 2019. DSS Special Agent Mike Yohey (back, white shirt, vest) and others examine ways to barricade an entrance at the U.S. embassy. (U.S. Department of State photo)

The DSS regional security office team defended the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, against a violent, coordinated, large-scale attack on Dec. 31, 2019. For over 30 hours well into New Year's Day 2020 violent attackers laid siege to the U.S. embassy compound, throwing Molotov cocktails, rocks, and projectiles over the walls. DSS special agents held fast, kept their cool, and deployed less-than-lethal munitions to repel the intruders.



DSS personnel install an indirect fire detection system at that U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia. (U.S. Department of State photo)

In 2020, the DSS Office of Security Technology improved the emergency notification for indirect fire detection at U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia. The Sense and Warn Program expanded the Wireless Audio-Visual Emergency System (WAVES) by 20 percent, which allows personnel to be notified when indirect fire is imminent.



***DSS security personnel train explosive detection canines at the Diplomatic Security Canine Training and Operations Center, Winchester, Va., Sept. 16, 2020.
(U.S. Department of State photo)***

In 2020, the Diplomatic Security Canine Training and Operations Center (CTOC) improved alignment of services and acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment to ensure preemptive care for canines to prevent illness/injury before they become serious. This change allows for a safe and effective canine procurement process, provides thorough training, and helps ensure that DSS explosive detection canines are highly qualified and operationally effective at some of the most challenging security locations around the world.



Foreign Emergency Support Team members board an aircraft bound for Lebanon to lend support to the U.S. Embassy in Beirut as part of the U.S. government's response following a large explosion at a warehouse in the capital city, Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Aug. 7, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

On Aug. 4, 2020, a massive explosion ripped through the port of Beirut, Lebanon, causing extensive injuries and damage throughout the surrounding area. Shortly after the blast, the U.S. Embassy in Beirut requested support from the DSS-led Foreign Emergency Support Team its first operational deployment in nearly a decade to help coordinate interagency support for emergency response, restoration of essential services, and public health and safety protection.



A DSS special agent and assistant regional security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, People's Republic of China (PRC), with the Marine Security Guard Detachment. (U.S. Department of State photo)

U.S. Marine Security Guards have supported the DSS mission overseas for more than 70 years. The U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Marine Corps reaffirmed the roles and responsibilities of this relationship on Oct. 13, 2020, when they signed a new memorandum of agreement.

Read more at: https://www.state.gov/usmc_moa_signing_2020.



DSS regional security office team helps process and board 195 Americans and other passengers for the first evacuation flight out of Wuhan, PRC, Jan. 29, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

In January 2020, as the new and highly infectious coronavirus began spreading through People's Republic of China (PRC), the local government unexpectedly closed the airport, stopped public transportation, and closed the roadways. U.S. diplomats and other personnel posted at the U.S. Consulate General in Wuhan were caught in the lockdown, worried about potential inability to access medical care and support services, and fearful they might not be able to leave Wuhan. DSS revised its evacuation plan quickly to help evacuate Americans on the first airlift out of Wuhan. This laid the groundwork for four additional evacuation flights that brought 600 Americans home by the end of February 2020.

Read more at: <https://www.state.gov/the-untold-coronavirus-story>.



A DSS special agent stands guard as Americans depart Podgorica, Montenegro, April 28, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

From January 27 through June 10, 2020, the U.S. Department of State coordinated the repatriation of 101,386 Americans on 1,140 flights from 136 countries and territories. DSS special agents and support staff in DSS regional security offices assisted with repatriations from the majority of locations.



U.S. Department of State management officers and DSS diplomatic courier personnel transfer custody of diplomatic pouches from the State Department's Operational Medicine support plane at Chinggis Khan International Airport, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, April 27, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

Partnering with the Directorate of Operational Medicine (Op Med), the DSS Diplomatic Courier Service delivered life-saving medical equipment and supplies to dozens of posts around the globe in support of the department's COVID-19 response. In January 2020, for example, Mongolia closed its southern border with the PRC to insulate the country from a potential outbreak, which led to domestic and international travel restrictions. The closure significantly hindered logistical operations of the U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar. Op Med and DSS diplomatic couriers collaborated to deliver urgent medical supplies and diplomatic pouches to Ulaanbaatar.



Boxes of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies await shipment to the department's global workforce during the early stages of COVID-19. (U.S. Department of State photo)

During the early stages of COVID-19, the DSS Countermeasures Directorate leadership initiated plans to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to its global workforce. The directorate's Field Support Branch (FSB) identified the type and amount of equipment needed, and determined the various locations where PPE was required. FSB streamlined its supply chain to track PPE. Given the success of this initiative, the State Department's Bureaus of Management and Acquisition, as well as the DSS Training Directorate, requested FSB's assistance in obtaining and delivering PPE for the broader workforce.



Before and after photos of the new Miami Regional Diplomatic Courier Division facility. (U.S. Department of State photo)

More than four years in the making, DSS opened its new Miami Regional Diplomatic Courier Division facility, a state-of-the-art property that maximizes efficiencies by combining the two existing offices in Fort Lauderdale and Miami. Its proximity to Miami International Airport will improve the couriers' ability to transport secure pouches to 40 posts in Central and South America.

The DSS Office of Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) trained and equipped hundreds of law enforcement officers in partner nations around the world. Below are a few examples of the work that ATA-trained officers conducted in 2020.



Investigators from the National Police, Joint Bureau for Counterterrorism and Transnational Organized Crime, and the U.S. Embassy Niamey's regional security office team's senior counterterrorism adviser, arrive near the scene of the October 2020 abduction of U.S. citizen Philippe Walton to collect information, question nearby villagers, and search for evidence.

ATA-trained officers with Niger's National Police Mobile Border Control Company, the National Guard, and the Special Intervention Group provided Security during a U.S. military operation that freed U.S. citizens Philippe Walton days after he had been abducted by transnational criminals.



DSS-trained Philippine National Police peacefully resolve a hostage situation at a shopping mall in Manila, the Philippines, when a former mall employee wounded a security guard then held approximately 30 people at gunpoint for more than nine hours before being overpowered while he was speaking to news media. Responders include police officers and police hostage negotiators trained by the DSS Office of Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA). (AP/Worldwide Photo)



An Afghan officer, trained by the DSS Office of Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA), carries a baby after gunmen attacked a maternity hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan, on May 12, 2020. A DSS-trained Critical Response Unit (CRU) responded to the terrorist attack, which killed 24 people. In a four-hour fire fight, ATA-trained and equipped officers killed three terrorists and evacuated more than 100 patients and staff, including numerous babies. In 2020, CRU teams responded to multiple high-profile terrorist attacks and also proactively arrested suspects, disrupted bomb-makers, and rooted out ISIS-affiliated attackers. (AP/Wide World Photos)

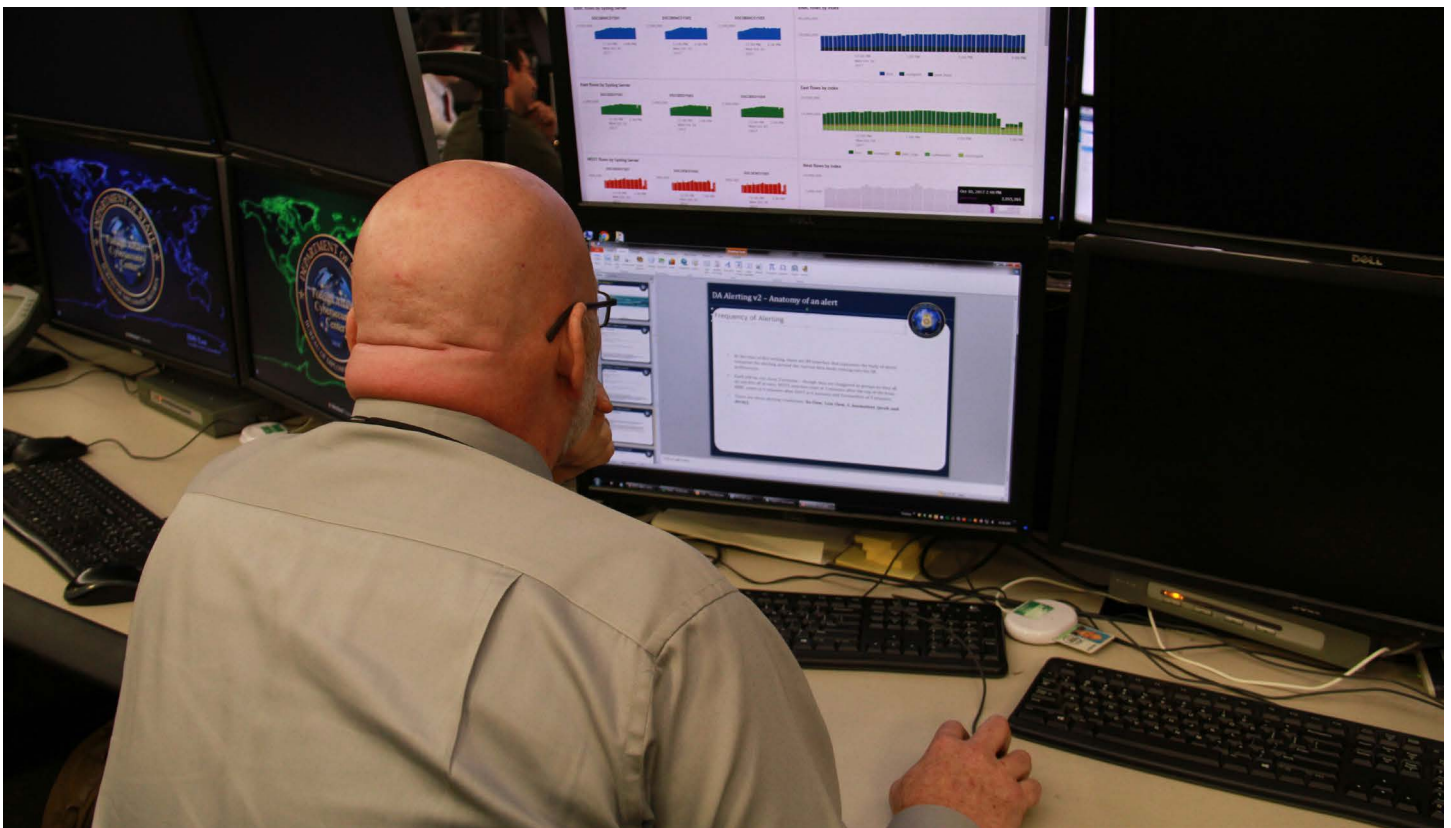


Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta waves Kenya's national flag while accepting a donation of \$1.2 million worth of vehicles and equipment provided by the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program in November 2020 at the Kanyonyo Regional Training Center in Kenya. The center, about 75 miles east of Nairobi, is ATA's newest regional training center, co-located with Kenya's Border Police Unit Training Campus. (Government of Kenya photo)

Secure

The DSS Cyber Incident Response Team (CIRT) provided continuous cybersecurity protection of U.S. Department of State networks and systems throughout 2020, analyzing over 70,000 security alerts, resolving over 5,500 cybersecurity incident response tickets, and issuing more than 3,000 blocks of malicious domains. To align cyber defenses to the expanded use of cloud services, DSS established a dedicated cloud monitoring team within CIRT to enhance protections in these emerging environments.

In 2020, DSS collaborated with the State Department's IT partners, bureaus, and diplomatic posts to accelerate delivery of secure telework options. Some of the applications and infrastructure DSS helped secure and deliver include databases, remote file download and print options, webcam and headsets, wireless technologies, and others.



A DSS cybersecurity professional reviews documents. (U.S. Department of State photo)



***DSS personnel test communications system before deploying to overseas personnel.
(U.S. Department of State photo)***

In July of 2020, the DSS Project Coordination Division, in collaboration with the DSS Office of the Chief Technology Officer, deployed the Residential Security Certified (RSC) online application. RSC supports regional security officers and residential security managers by providing a streamlined and standardized process for surveying and certifying residences for occupancy in accordance with the residential security standards. RSC also serves as the DSS record-keeping application for all off-embassy compound housing.

Investigate

Secretary of State Robert Lansing created the DSS predecessor organization during World War I to investigate passport and visa fraud, support threat reporting from overseas, and gather counterespionage and intelligence information. Today, DSS continues those investigative endeavors, which help protect the integrity of the U.S. travel documents, support border security, and protect U.S. Department of State assets.



DSS stock image (U.S. Department of State photo)

In 2020, DSS Overseas Criminal Investigations (OCI) Division, conducted nearly 1,500 transnational criminal investigations tied to visa and passport fraud. DSS contributed to dismantling international human smuggling networks and investigated international labor and sex trafficking cases.

DSS Investigators also helped facilitate foreign government arrests of visa fraud rings around the globe. Even during the global pandemic, DSS located and helped return more than 235 fugitives to face charges for crimes such as child exploitation, murder, identity theft, money laundering, and passport fraud.

Investigate



Passports, currency, and identification documents seized by the U.S. Embassy Santo Domingo's vetted police unit during Operation VIP, Nov. 4, 2020. (U.S. Department of State photo)

On Nov. 4, 2020, the assistant regional security officer-investigator's vetted police unit at the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, led "Operation VIP," which dismantled a document fraud ring operating in the Dominican Republic, the United States, and Europe. Dominican law enforcement officers comprised the vetted police unit that worked with other federal law enforcement agencies. Operation VIP led to the arrest of 18 individuals, including airline personnel and Dominican immigration and passport officers, who falsified official documents.

Investigate



In October 2020, DSS and U.S. law enforcement partners arrested six individuals charged with conspiracy to launder millions of dollars of drug proceeds on behalf of foreign cartels. The arrests were the result of a nearly four-year investigation into the relationship between foreign drug trafficking organizations and Asian money laundering networks in the United States, the PRC, and elsewhere.

DSS stock image. (U.S. Department of State photo)



Former Maricopa County Assessor Paul Petersen (right), with his attorney, Kurt Altman, leave after a court hearing in Phoenix, Arizona, Nov. 5, 2019. (AP Photo/Jacques Billeaud)

On Dec.1, 2020, an investigation led by the DSS Hot Springs Resident Office resulted in Paul Petersen receiving six years in federal prison for smuggling pregnant women from the Republic of the Marshall Islands into the United States for the sole purpose of giving birth an illegal act as outlined by the Compact of Free Association Agreement between the Marshall Islands and the United States. Those involved in the illegal smuggling scheme falsified records, including U.S. visa applications, and victimized both the mothers and the unwitting adoptive families.

Investigate



After a joint U.S. law enforcement investigation that included DSS, the Eastern District of New York charged 10 individuals with transporting stolen property, failure to file export information, and related crimes. Those involved in the criminal network smuggled electronic devices from the United States to Russia using couriers, many of whom were current and former employees of Aeroflot Airlines. As a result of the investigation, the U.S. Department of State revoked more than 100 visas of Aeroflot employees.

(Shutterstock image)



Members of the Boogaloo Movement attend a demonstration against the lockdown over concern about COVID-19 at the State House, April 18, 2020, in Concord, N.H.. (AP Photo/Michael Dwyer)

On Aug. 3, 2020, the Minneapolis Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) arrested members of the Boogaloo Bois, a loosely organized, extremist political movement in the United States, and its subgroup Boojahideen for attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. The DSS agent assigned to the JTTF was instrumental to the investigation, and in the final phase of the operation, he led a team that executed multiple search warrants, contributing to the arrest of two members of the Boogaloo Bois.

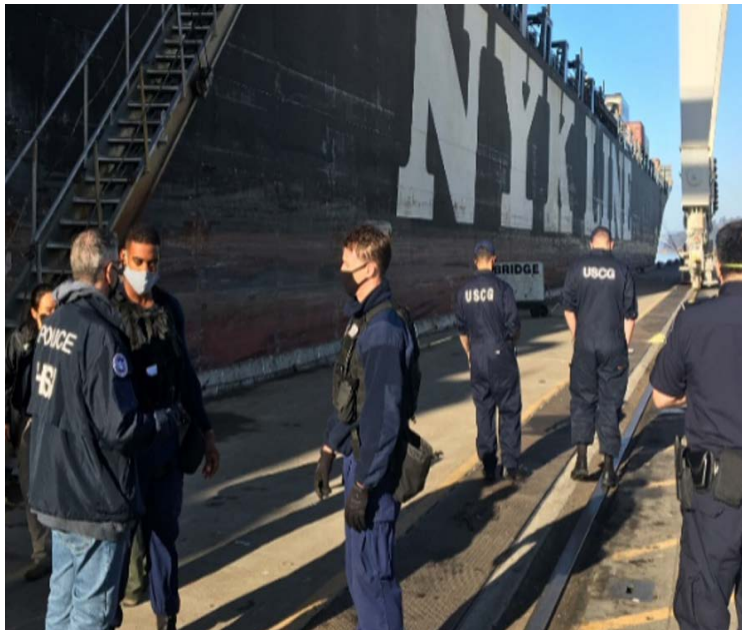
Investigate



A member of the DSS biometrics training team assists a foreign service national investigator with enrolling employees in the Diplomatic Security Identity Assurance System at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, August 2019. (U.S. Department of State photo)

In 2020, the DSS Counterintelligence and Counterterrorism Vetting Division's (CCV) Biometrics-Branch received 4,775 biometric enrollments from 30 posts, identified 19 individuals on the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Biometrically Enrolled Watch List (BEWL), and submitted 101 new DoD BEWL nominations. In August 2020, CCV received authorization to deploy its Diplomatic Security Identity Assurance System (DSIAS) worldwide over the next five years in direct support of foreign service national staff vetting. DSS is implementing the program at higher risk posts first. CCV's Polygraph Branch conducted a record 22 domestic exams for State Department employees and an additional 218 exams in Iraq and Afghanistan, for a total of 713 exams in 2020.

Investigate



In 2019, the DSS Office of Counterintelligence joined the FBI National Counterintelligence Task Force (N CITF) and embedded DSS agents into eight CITFs throughout the United States. In 2020, the embedded agents continued to support the CITF mission by investigating the illegal production, distribution, and use of U.S. or foreign visas and passports to counter espionage objectives by foreign intelligence services. Since their CITF integration, DSS special agents have arrested multiple PRC researchers who have misrepresented their military affiliations on visa applications to access U.S. industries to commit economic espionage.

A DSS special agent (center) supports Operation Savvy Tide, a 45-day campaign in which Counterintelligence Task Force (CITF) agents boarded PRC and Russian-crewed maritime vessels to investigate potential espionage and criminal activity in the Port of San Francisco. (U.S. Department of State photo).

REWARD UP TO \$10 MILLION

For Information on Foreign Election Interference

The United States Department of State Rewards for Justice program is offering up to \$10 million for information leading to the identification or location of any person who, while acting at the direction of or under the control of a foreign government, interferes with any U.S. federal, state, or local elections.

If you have any information on malicious cyber operations targeting U.S. elections or its infrastructure, please contact us at the information provided.

U.S. Department of State
Rewards for Justice

001-202-999-5113 @RFJ_Election_Bot

A graphic used for the August 2020 DSS Rewards for Justice digital ad campaign, which was part of a multi-agency initiative to secure the November 2020 U.S. elections. (U.S. Department of State image)

The Office of Rewards for Justice (RFJ) launched a global digital ad campaign on Aug. 5, 2020, announcing a new reward offer of up to \$10 million for information on any person working with or for a foreign government to interfere with U.S. elections through illegal cyber activities. The RFJ digital ad campaign was part of a multi-agency initiative to secure the November 2020 U.S. elections. RFJ deployed social media, video, online ads, text and robo-call messaging, and its website to generate both tips and significant international news coverage.



An instructor provides Regional Security Office Local Vetting (RESOLVE) training to regional security officers and foreign service national investigators at the International Law Enforcement Academy on Dec. 5, 2019, in Bangkok, Thailand. (U.S. Department of State)

In 2020, DSS deployed the Regional Security Office Local Vetting (RESOLVE) system, which provides regional security officers and foreign service national investigators (FSNis) a means to efficiently and effectively conduct standardized background investigations on local staff and locally hired contractors granted security certifications at post. Previously, each regional security office used its own process to conduct background investigations. Currently, 170 RSO shops are using RESOLVE.

By the Numbers

283 U.S. Diplomatic Posts Overseas

33 DSS Offices in U.S. Cities

2,059 Special Agents

1,950 U.S. Marine Security Guards

198 Security Engineering Officers

2,148 Domestic Civilian Contractors

1,400 Uniformed Protective Officers/Guards

884 Civil Servants

916 Background Investigators

142 Security Technical Specialists

43,000 Local Guard Force and Surveillance Detection team personnel

91 Diplomatic Couriers

139 U.S. Navy Seabees

